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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE REMOVAL AND PREVENTION
EPA CONTRACT 68-01-7367

Mr. Steven Faryan
Deputy Project Officer
Emergency Response Section
Western Response Unit
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
11th Floor
230 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

November 29, 1988

TAT-05-G2-00741

Re: Polk and California Emergency Response
Chicago, Illinois
TDD #5-8810-64

Dear Mr. Faryan:

On October 12, 1988, at 1330 hours, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) tasked the Region V Technical Assistance Team (TAT) to conduct a release investigation at an auto-repair facility at Polk Street and California Avenue in Chicago, Illinois (Figure 1). The response was prompted by an anonymous phone call to the U.S. EPA indicating that over 100 drums of acid and cyanide were present in a make-shift auto-repair facility. TAT members Richard Mehl and Phillip Wicklein accompanied U.S. EPA On-Site Coordinator (OSC) Richard Rupert on the investigation.

The response team located an auto-repair facility on the north side of Polk Street just west of California Avenue. The TAT and OSC Rupert entered the shop with the owner, but failed to find any indication of the chemical wastes reported to the U.S. EPA. The building owner indicated that another auto shop was located in a building at 901-925 South California, one block south of Polk Street.

Upon arriving at the building, the TAT and OSC Rupert located a worker who gave permission to look around. The TAT and OSC observed approximately 100 staged drums and overpacks in this former plating facility. The deteriorated drums appeared to contain a variety of waste chemicals including acids, caustics, and cyanides. In addition, the facility was observed to contain several empty plating vats, and a variety of abandoned equipment. The worker informed OSC Rupert that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) had begun a removal action about a month earlier and had planned to complete the cleanup. While waiting

Roy F. Weston, Inc.

SPILL PREVENTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION

In Association with ICF Technology Inc., C.C. Johnson & Malhotra, P.C., Resource Applications, Inc.,
Geo/Resource Consultants, Inc., and Environmental Toxicology International, Inc.



Mr. Steven J. Faryan

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for the building owner to arrive, the TAT and OSC observed the auto-repair operation which was being conducted adjacent to the staged drums of waste chemicals. Approximately five workers occupied the facility including a small child. OSC Rupert obtained a telephone number of the owner who failed to return to the facility. After returning to the office OSC Rupert confirmed that the IEPA was involved in a removal action at the auto-repair facility.

Based on the conditions observed during the site investigation, the TAT recommends that the U.S. EPA confirm that the IEPA has completed the removal action. If the IEPA fails to complete the removal action, the TAT recommends U.S. EPA conduct a site assessment to evaluate the threats posed by the site.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

ROY F. WESTON, INC.

Sally Matz

FOR Phillip C. Wicklein
Technical Assistance Team
Leader, Region V

PCW:dn